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ABSTRACT

One college's examination of its tutoring program led to conclusions that can be applied to many tutoring programs. The most important conclusion was that faculty should be involved in as many stages of the tutorial process as possible. Specifically, five conditions should be met to create a productive teacher tutor relationship: (1) the teacher should have a central role in choosing the tutor for the class, (2) the teacher and tutor should understand the goals of the developmental program, (3) the teacher and tutor should understand their respective authority and responsibility, (4) the tutor should be present and involved in classes, and (5) the teacher and tutor should share their insights, problems, and suggestions. To improve faculty involvement, tutorial coordinators should promote teacher participation in the planning, recruiting, functioning, supervising and evaluating of tutorial programs. (A bibliography of resources concerning tutoring in higher education is included.) (JL)

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FACULTY INVOLVEMENT: THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL TUTORING PROGRAM

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Faculty Involvement: the Key to a Successful Tutoring Program. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Keystone State Reading Association. (15th, White Haven, PA, October 13-15, 1982)

Authors: Celeste Burns Sexauer, Janet A. Fuller

Various types of tutoring programs exist on college campuses in this country. At one college an innovative program has been developed which involves the teaching faculty in all aspects of the program. Faculty involvement is a key factor in this very successful program. Other existing tutorial programs can be improved to increase faculty involvement.

Types of Programs

Tutoring programs exist in many forms. Some programs use paid tutors; others use volunteers. Some use student peers; others use only professionals. Some programs emphasize individualized sessions; others advocate small group sessions. At some colleges all tutoring is done by appointment; at others, drop-ins are welcomed. Some programs encourage tutors to be involved in the classroom; others discourage it. Some programs use all of the above possibilities; others use various combinations. The diversity among programs is almost limitless, and the success of the individual program while related to these factors can seldom be attributed to them.

In an effort to ascertain the key elements of a successful tutoring program, one college began by examining its program's format and its practices. One element consistently mentioned by students, tutors, and faculty as having a positive effect on the program was the involvement of the faculty in various processes of the program.

An Innovative Program

The college is a four-year, public institution with an enrollment of approximately 2,400 undergraduate and 220 graduate students. The tutorial program is coordinated by the Coordinator of Skill Development in the Learning Resource Center, a part of the Educational Services Division. Services are available to all students enrolled in the college. Two different but overlapping programs are provided by the college.

One program, provided during the regular academic year uses primarily paid student peer tutors outside of the classroom in one-to-one tutoring situations. Almost all of these services are on a drop-in basis. Occassionally volunteers are used, small group sessions are held, or tutors work by appointment. Students interested in becoming tutors must secure the written recommendation of a faculty member in the subject to be tutored. After being hired, tutors are to advise professors of their hours and to contact course professors about specific problems. When a tutor works with several students from one class, they sometimes attend the class as an observer or, on occassion, as an aide.

The other program provided during a 6-week developmental education summer experience, uses paid student peer tutors in and out of the classroom in one-to-one and small group sessions. These sessions are scheduled but are open for drop-ins as well. A very close working relationship between professors and tutors is essential to the success of this program.

For this reason, we have outlined five conditions which must be met if the teacher-tutor relationship is to be productive. These include the following:

Condition 1 -- The teacher should have a central role in choosing the tutor for the class.

Condition 2 -- The teacher and the tutor should understand the goals of the developmental program and their part in the program well before the first class meets.

Condition 3 -- The teacher and the tutor should understand clearly and agree upon the nature of and the limits of their respective authority and responsibility.

Condition 4 -- The tutor should be present at most, if not all, classes and should be involved in the class in a way that continually reinforces for the students the reality of the teacher-tutor relationship.

Condition 5 -- The teacher and the tutor should share regularly their insights, problems, and suggestions. (Sexauer and Koloski, 1981)

Faculty Involvement

Although the above conditions pertain to a program in which the tutor attends the classes and assists the teacher, the elements which make the program productive can be applied to other types of tutorial programs. The key is involving the faculty in as many stages of the tutorial process as possible. New tutoring programs should include faculty in all stages including planning. Operational programs can be improved by systematically involving the academic faculty in existing processes.

Any planned change should begin with an assessment of current status. The form presented below can be used to record those stages at which various elements of the target and client population are involved. Planners can then note weak areas and make efforts at involving more people as needed.

TUTORIAL PROGRAM

CURRENT STATUS

Who is Involved in:	Coordinator	Tutors	Academic Faculty	Administration	Students
1. Planning					
2. Recruitment of Tutors					
3. Assigning students to tutors					
4. Evaluating students' performance					
5. Assigning tutor tasks					
6. Training tutors					
7. Observing tutors					
8. Developing evaluative criteria					
9. Evaluating the program					
10. Restructuring program					

Although faculty members cannot or may not choose to be involved at all stages, they usually can be encouraged to participate in some. The following few activities are suggested as beginning points for tutorial coordinators who are seeking ways to involve the faculty in their programs.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

A. Planning

   1. Determine goals

   2. Determine responsibilities

B. Recruiting

   1. Determine qualifications

   2. Determine procedures

C. Functioning

   1. Identify students

   2. Review student performance

D. Supervising

   1. Train tutors

   2. Observe tutors

E. Evaluating

   1. Determine criteria

   2. Responde to feedback

RESOURCES

Any presentation of this nature is limited because of time and it is impossible for us to review all of the resources available on tutoring so we have prepared a bibliography of those articles and reports we have found most helpful. One observation that we can make about information on tutorial programs is that there is not enough. And one more suggestion that we have is that you might consider asking a faculty colleague at your institution to co-author an article with you about your tutorial program. We will all benefit from that kind of faculty involvement.

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